

A

N I G H T - P I E C E

K

A P O E M.

Ἡ ΠΟΙΚΙΛΑΕΙΜΟΝ ΝΥΞ—

ÆSCHYL.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for WILLIAM CREECH.

MDCCLXXXI.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

46-
12 17.
1132,



[Price One Shilling.]

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE design of this little piece is, to describe the progressive appearance of a night in Autumn, and the correspondent nocturnal scenery, from evening till midnight.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
500 N. 5TH ST. NEW YORK 17, N.Y.
1911

N I G H T - P I E C E.

HOW soft and solemn are th'advancing steps
Of Night and Silence! while with meeken'd eye
And winning look, retiring from the view,
Calm Contemplation muses on her way,
Improving Night, and in her turn improv'd.

THE orb of day withdraws his golden beams,
Refulgent still o'er half the arch of heav'n,
Through broken clouds of mingled light and shade,
That skirt th' horizon with his redd'ning ray.
The temp'rate air, the sky serene and pure,
Breathe all their sweetness on the yellow plain,
And welcome Ev'ning from her eastern bow'r,
Whence shade on shade she spreads of mildest hue.

THIS is the pleasing and the silent hour,
 Best priz'd by you, and best by you enjoy'd,
 Ye friends of Nature! ye that love to trace
 Her various footsteps and her paths divine;
 That oft forsake the haunts of restless man,
 To woo calm Reason in the rural shade;
 Or else far roaming o'er the verdant wild,
 To meet the gale on the romantic mount,
 Or bend your course along the fruitful vale,
 Where, 'midst the frequent sheaf and waving corn,
 With busy hand attendant Plenty weaves
 The wheaten garland and the rustic crown,
 And gives rough Industry his just reward.
 With glist'ning eyes, and looks that speak delight,
 Ye view these scenes, ye taste the various sweets
 Profusely scatter'd o'er th' Autumnal plain:
 Whether ye stray beneath th' embow'ring shade,
 Where tufted roots supply the rustic seat;
 Along the level lawn, or margent turf
 With many a shrub o'erhung, and many a flow'r
 Oft kiss'd in silence by the mazy rill;
 Or o'er the grassy slope, where Friendship loves
 To lift her thoughts in gratitude to Heav'n,
 Bless'd with the pleasures of the present hour,
 And calmly looking for the future joy.
 Still happy ye, to whom these joyous scenes

Smile not in vain ; for whom blow not in vain
 These balms of health, these pure refreshing airs,
 The richest fragrance of the ripen'd year :
 While sailing on her dusky-bosom'd cloud,
 Grey Twilight smiles the stirring world to peace ;
 And through the op'ning cloud bright Venus shows
 Her beaming forehead in the darken'd East,
 And lends the lovely radiance of her brow
 To gild the growing beauty of the scene,
 To add new lustre to the social hour
 That joins the festive to the feeling heart.
 The mind, combining knowledge with delight,
 And gath'ring pleasure from whate'er may please,
 To Fancy yields the pencil and design :
 Her themes inspire and guide her magic hand
 To paint alike the present and the past,
 From scene to scene she ranges unconfin'd,
 Pleas'd with her own variety and ease,
 And views whate'er or Art or Nature frames
 In just perfection, simple and sublime.

REAR'D by the patient and industrious hand,
 Yon elms appear along the sheltering wall ;
 Where, from the bitter blast that blows at eve,
 The friends of man, the ruminating herd

And

And the domestic woolly race, retire,
 What time the herdsman sounds his ev'ning-horn.
 Warn'd by the well-known tone, the gath'ring throng
 Silent and slow approach the friendly shade,
 Ere Night's deep gloom descend upon the plain.

SWEET Eve now yields to grey-ey'd Night her sway :
 With aspect mild and serious mien she comes,
 Inspiring wisdom and exalted thought.
 Serene and staid are her ascending steps
 Along the hill by rising vapours hid,
 The distant prospect fading in her sight.
 A browner shade involves the lengthen'd vale.
 The mist low-creeping, up the river rolls
 In thicker volumes from the sea-beat shore,
 Where the dark rock repels the dashing wave.
 On the red cliff, his scaly limbs outstretch'd,
 Old Ocean's hoary Genius slumb'ring lies :
 His tangled hair loose waving in the breeze,
 He checks its progress o'er the restless deep,
 His bleak domain ; and list'ning with delight,
 'Midst broken rocks he hears the swelling surge
 Discordant rushing, rapid and repress'd.

THESE rifted rocks how dreadful and how dark !
 Undeck'd, unshelter'd by yon scraggy thorns,

Wet with the brine that foams and breaks below.
 Each found that issues from the wave-worn caves,
 Spreads solemn awe, and saddens all the scene;
 Fit haunt of pining Love and black Despair.
 'Tis here the Lover seeks congenial gloom,
 To give his woes to solitude and night.
 His bosom beating with unusual throbs,
 With hopeless passion and unchanging love,
 Requires the charms how vainly deem'd his own!
 The look of pleasure, and the smile of joy,
 That darted transport through his thrilling frame.
 To the still bow'r and solitary grove
 Retiring oft, he roams his pathless way,
 Where oft he led the partner of his heart,
 Whose smile was rapture, and whose love was heav'n:
 Where oft he hung on that endearing voice,
 Which strikes, at times, th' impassion'd ear of love,
 When all the scenes of former joys revive——
 Scenes which no more shall realize delight!
 In silent woe, behold him where he stands;
 His loose robe waving in th' uncertain breeze;
 His clasp'd hands lifted, and his looks unfix'd:
 From his rais'd eye oft bursts the burning tear;
 His pale lip trembles; on his pining cheek
 Steals Love's sweet languish mix'd with wild Despair;

His bosom heaves involuntary sighs,
And words are wanting to express his woe.

ESCAP'D the gloom, I hail each conscious star
That round me sheds its cheering, twinkling light.
This arch sublime, these unabating fires,
For ever glowing and for ever grand,
Now bright'ning, kindling with a purer ray,
Beam mildest lustre on th' enlighten'd eye.
To all though common, with no common pow'r
They please, they charm the chosen few inflam'd,
Divine Philosophy, with love of thee :
Thee chief they charm, and him thy best belov'd,
Who, led by thee, or unrestrain'd beholds
Great Nature working in her deep recess,
With bolder hand unlocks her precious springs ;
Or marks her progress through the tracts of air,
High soars to heav'n, and mingles with the stars.
In his just ear, to Nature's voice attun'd,
They roll harmonious : while descending Peace,
Through ether waving her refulgent robe,
Adorns the scene. Her wings bedropt with gold *
The Seraph spreads, where Solitude is wont
To pour her silent ecstasies around.

* Show to the sun their wav'd coats dropt with gold.

Nor she alone, though holy be her haunt,
 Serenes his bosom and prolongs its calm :
 By her conducted, lo, Contentment comes,
 Comes not unfought, and not unbidden smiles,
 And ev'ry smile confers unbounded bliss,
 Bliss unimpair'd, and permanent delight,
 Secure of change, while all is changing round.
 Whether the balmy touch of Spring awake
 The freshen'd gale, inspiring love and joy ;
 Or whether Summer, prime in beauty, lead
 His matchless pencil o'er the flow'ry lawn,
 And lend new sweetness to the blushing rose ;
 Or Autumn, eying the surrounding scene,
 See hills and vales responsive to his voice,
 With harvests cover'd, and with flocks adorn'd ;
 Or Winter, wrapt in uninviting gloom,
 Send forth the tempest and careering storm,
 His elder born, who to the solid base
 Shake the firm earth, and urge Destruction on :—
 Alike to him the varying year revolves,
 All seasons, as they change, alike can please,
 Best welcom'd by Content, and best resign'd.

DEEP-MUSING, thence he bends his cheerful steps
 To the still mount, an unfrequented scene,
 Where climbing woodbines round the hazel twine,

And

And ivy round the rock ; where shoots the briar,
 Form'd to perfume or beautify the foil,
 Amidst the pines that hide the lake below,
 Young Fancy's shadowy forms amuse the eye.
 Where sighs the gale, and sighing dies away,
 Slow spread the murmurs to amuse the ear,
 Sweet to the sense, and soothing as the tales
 Of Age reviving in the summer sun.
 The murmurs shaken from the quiv'ring rill,
 Refresh lone Quiet in her lov'd retreat *,
 Perchance reclining on the hanging cliff,
 Pleas'd with the whisper of the passing breeze ;
 Perchance beholding Fancy's slumb'rous train
 Steal unperceiv'd, to sip the dewy balm
 Of lowly thyme, and sink to sweet repose.
 O'er all the woodland leaden Stillness reigns,
 Nor fears annoyance in her native shade :
 Calm is the osier-bank, the slimy reeds
 In silence deep surround the sluggish lake.

IN scenes like these, beneath an ancient oak,
 The hoary Bards, great masters of the song,
 Amidst their musings strung the British lyre :

* And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks. THOMSON.

At times 'twas melting, and at times 'twas grand.
 They touch'd the strings of sympathetic woe,
 And wept the warrior whom a people mourn'd :
 They sooth'd the bosom with harmonious strains,
 Calm'd hostile rage, and reinspiring peace,
 Turn'd private passions to the public weal :
 They swell'd the note of liberty and fame,
 That kindled glory and the love of arms,
 And, breathing the sublime of British thought,
 Rose with its theme, and was what it inspir'd.
 Each sound was big with honour and renown :
 Ev'n peasants, guarding from the prowling wolf
 Their straggling flocks, grew heroes as they heard.
 At ev'ry pause, they saw, or seem'd to see,
 The steel-clad Genius of Britannia's isle
 Now fix his helmet, and now seize his spear :
 At ev'ry pause, there issued from the grove
 A voice to Virtue and to Britons dear,
 " Your country calls, and be her call obey'd."
 Thus rous'd, they fought, and Freedom was the prize.

EACH radiant orb with milder lustre shines ;
 And Night, more lovely in her silent course,
 Reflects new beauties to the Sage's eye.
 Bold Science stretches her undazzled flight,
 Nor fears t' explore th' illimitable void ;

Where other skies by other suns are cheer'd,
 And other stars, that flame in distant day,
 And kindle endless on th' advancing view:
 A scene for Newton and immortals made.

THE sweet serenity and smile of heav'n
 Refresh his bosom; till uprising soft,
 With broader aspect and superior beam,
 Night's placid queen enrobes the mount in gold.
 The mistress, not the tyrant of the sky,
 Nor thron'd amidst insufferable heat;
 How meek and modest is her beaming brow!
 Oft half conceal'd behind the lucid cloud,
 And oft driv'n giddy through the reeling air;
 Or by portentous circling wanness dimm'd,
 Prefage unwelcome of the coming blast.
 Her shining car now doubtfully she guides,
 And slowly wheels along the blue serene,
 With virgin fear and influence benign:
 Till, bright and lovely, she diffuse her smile
 Wide as her beam, to bid the world repose,
 To pour more sweet from heav'n's unclouded height
 Her streaming radiance o'er the soften'd scene.

AND now, descried by many an optic tube,
 Earth's lengthen'd shadow flow-approaching veils.

Her

Her soft'ning beauty and her joyous beam.
 A twilight-gloom first o'er her aspect spreads;
 Succeeding darkness stains th' empurpled orb
 With gloom less dubious and with deeper red.
 With eager gaze and superstitious fear,
 Her lurid face the village-crowd survey,
 Who ne'er admir'd the sweetness of her smile.
 Not thus the Sage, who views with equal eye
 The native mildness of her nightly sway,
 The murky shades that now surround her throne,
 Her car discolour'd, and her troubled brow.
 Now faintly dawns her trembling, glimm'ring light;
 Again relucient shines her orient ray,
 Whose silver radiance skirts yon rising cloud,
 And greets the plain: while waxing in his sight,
 Her beauty growing with her growing beam,
 She shines unveil'd, resplendent and serene.
 The lucid stream, low vale, and distant hill,
 Are cheer'd anew, and in her smile rejoice.

THE Sage partaking of the gen'ral joy,
 With tranquil look pursues the changeful view,
 From hill or vale or clear unruffled stream.
 Meanwhile, 'tis said, his pure enlighten'd eye,
 His eye enlighten'd by the conscious Muse,
 Beholds the pow'rs benign of Thought descend;

Truth's angel-form, her starry zone unbound,
 Her piercing eye by Piety illum'd,
 A glowing seraph with a humbler name ;
 And white-rob'd Faith *, and Fortitude serene,
 Indulgent Candour, to herself severe,
 And cheerful Patience, unsubdued by wrongs.
 All hail, ye heav'nly train ! for ye mature
 The vig'rous purpose and the warm resolve
 Of him who courts not, flies not honest fame,
 Sway'd by th' unbiafs'd dictates of the heart :
 Or on the breast perplex'd, ye largely shed
 Assuasive sweetness and celestial balm :
 Exulting in the task, ye joy to guide
 The youth who woos you, and pursues your path,
 (High emulation, and well nigh divine !)
 To gain th' abode where Science fits sublime,
 By Wisdom guarded, and by Virtue crown'd.

THESE fir'd thee, Hope †, and taught to think and feel ;
 These early wak'd thy unallay'd desire
 Of knowledge pure, thy manly love of good ;

* — albo rara fides —

Velata panno. HOR.

† This amiable person died at Lyons, whither he had gone for the recovery of his health, in his twenty-second year, August 27. 1776.

These on thy bosom pour'd th' enliv'ning ray,
 Whose genial warmth unfolds the latent seeds
 And lovely blossoms of expanding worth.—
 But man's best hopes how transient and how vain!
 To fade they flourish'd, and they bloom'd to die,
 Nipp'd like the rose-bud by the northern blast.
 O long Lamented ! take this verse sincere,
 Imperfect tribute, from a grateful Muse ;
 If yet her verse from this low spot may rise,
 If yet her lyre, amidst celestial choirs,
 'Midst harps made vocal by no mortal hand,
 May touch thine ear attun'd to strains divine,
 Seraphic rapture and seraphic song.

Now beauties, countless as this arch can boast,
 And mild as they, invite th' exploring eye
 Of him whom sweet Simplicity may please.
 When Night and Nature harmonize the soul,
 And all is tranquil as his temp'rate mind,
 O'er all, he looks complacency and peace :
 But chiefly fixes his enraptur'd eye
 On this benign, this bright night-wand'ring orb,
 While soft she gleams within the open glade,
 Where Zephyr prints with lighter step the lawn.
 'Tis smiling Night conducts his frequent course,
 Uncertain straying in the silent scene :

The roughen'd oak with noxious ivy clad,
 Throws o'er the stream its wildly-spreading arms;
 Bent from the steep, the quiv'ring aspen shakes;
 And dim appears the blasted riven plane,
 Worn by dank moss, and all-consuming age.
 A solemn shade o'erspreads the darkling dell,
 Pleasing to him who wanders underneath,
 And views the streamlet broken from the rock;
 Now, dash'd precipitous, amidst abrupt
 Obstructing fragments; now, where spreads the vale,
 It smoothly glides between the quiet banks,
 And from its humid bosom scatters wide,
 In sweet profusion, herbs and fruits and flow'rs.
 When not a breath invades its clear expanse,
 The stream, scarce stirring on its pebbly bed,
 Reflects the image of enliv'ning heav'n,
 Fair semblance of its own refreshing face.

THE shaded dell, the moon-enlighten'd walk,
 And glassy stream, full oft allure the boy,
 When keen intrusive sport no longer prompts,
 In sober hour, to mark the charming mien
 Of mild Instruction borrowing Fancy's aid.
 Onward he strays, and craves the winning tale:
 Or else reposing on the mossy brink,
 Oft wonders why within the glitt'ring wave

The Moon so pale and tremulous appears ;
 She smiling still wheels on her downward car,
 'Midst floating cliffs and undulating clouds.
 Advancing thence, with wonder and delight
 He eyes the rock's projecting horrid edge,
 The jutting rock by mingling shrubs conceal'd :
 Where scanty bramble, scarce distinguish'd, shoots
 Its trembling twigs athwart the roaring stream ;
 And pale *convolvulus* withdraws its balms
 From Night's keen eye : Beneath, redundant flows
 The fountain, pouring from its flinty urn
 The bubbling current, ceaseless rushing on,
 Awak'ning Echo in her lonely cell.
 Sole o'er the cliff yon ancient wild-ash hangs,
 On whose proud head have many an howling blast
 And wintry heav'n with rage redoubled burst.
 Yet there once grew the lofty parent-trunks,
 Whose shapeless roots, still unsubstu'd by age,
 From the rude cliff extend their vig'rous boughs,
 Denied the moisture of a richer mould.
 So sprang the Heroes of the barren North,
 So, nurs'd by Nature's rugged, daring hand,
 'Midst rocks and savage wilds they largely thriv'd,
 The hardy plants of an inclement soil.

THE Hind, who, mindful of his fleecy charge,

Had left his humble cot, now homeward hies
 With quicker steps, defended by his club
 And faithful dog, companions of his toil.
 Oft with suspicious eye he looks around ;
 In each dim trunk, and silent cliff, he sees
 The fabled forms that wield their giant arms,
 And whirl the winter storm, or frowning fling
 Their magic horror on the gloom below.

His humble cot now shows the poor remains
 Of what the Hero and the Chieftain plann'd.
 The fabric crumbled like the hands that rear'd
 Its rude magnificence, like them attests
 The sweep of Ages, and the stroke of Time.
 But is not Earth, with all that rolls on high,
 Thus doom'd by Fate, and hasten'd to decay ?
 The birth of Nature was her doom begun :
 Revolving ages but suspend the blow,
 And Time's vast series is a moment's pause ;
 That moment pass'd, the mighty frame dissolves.—
 But hark ! within the hall where Beauty shone,
 Where Pastime wanton'd, and where Pleasure reign'd,
 The bird of Night's malignant scream is heard,
 The boding raven calls her croaking mate,
 And spreads a chilling tremor round the walls.
 So Fancy, waving her creative wand,

In midnight-hour, displays th' enchanting scenes
 That melt the soul to softness and delight ;
 Ere morning dawns, the fleeting phantoms fly,
 Their fancied beauties die at once away,
 And gloom and sadness rush upon the mind.

THE speckled adder, and impoison'd toad,
 Now freely issue from the mould'ring wall,
 Now brood, detested ! in the dripping dome,
 Where wont the aged Warrior to recount
 His boastful tale ; where, baring ev'ry scar,
 He rous'd the youth to emulate their fires :
 While round him hung, the deeds of other years,
 The well-won spoils that deck'd his ancient hall.
 The list'ning youth, transported with his fame,
 With deeds their fires perform'd, at once half drew
 Their gleaming weapons, and requir'd the fight.

HERE shin'd the Fair : as in th' autumnal sky
 These bright'ning orbs, 'midst intervening clouds,
 Dart keener lustre to the longing eye ;
 So, bright through all th' opposing mists of Time,
 Shine forth the forms of Beauty and of Love,
 That hail'd the stranger to the sumptuous feast *,

* " Son of the distant Sora," began the mildly-blushing maid, " come
 " to the feast of Morven's king, to Selma's shaded walls. Take the peace
 " of heroes."—— OSSIAN.

The feast of Friendship, and the joy of Shells ;
 That struck the lyre, and rais'd to just renown
 The Chief whom Glory and the Fair inspir'd *.
 The favour'd Chief, who, like his native rocks,
 That shake the tempest from their thund'ring sides,
 Withstood the fierceness of contending arms ;
 Or turn'd their own insidious coward arts
 Against the lurking foes of female worth.
 The grateful Fair admir'd his matchless deeds ;
 They smil'd applause, and gave him all his fame.
 Their smile the prize the gallant Hero sought :
 For this, the field of honour he defied,
 Undaunted suffer'd, and unconquer'd fell.

OF these, no more ; no more may virgin charms
 Enkindle fury and emblaze the plain :
 By gentler hands be Beauty's pow'r upheld,
 And captive hearts retain'd by softer ties,
 By bashful Modesty's enchanting smile,
 Her look unconscious, feminine and mild,
 Her voice delightful as the dew of Spring
 Distilling balms and shedding sweet perfume.

* We came to the halls of Selma. We sat around the feast of shells.
 The maids of song came into our presence, and the mildly-blushing Evi-
 rallin.—She touched the harp of music ; we blessed the daughter of
 Branno. OSSIAN.

Ye Fair, let just refinement be your boast,
 The heart that feels, the feelings that confess
 How dear to woman woman's best concerns:
 With tender art (such art affection knows),
 To ease the burden of parental years;
 With all the mildness of domestic care,
 And all the sweet solicitude of love,
 To bless the husband and to cheer the friend,
 His joys enliven and his toils relieve;
 With fost'ring hand, to form the gen'rous boy
 To manly conduct and to deeds humane,
 The blooming fair to meek and modest grace;
 By ev'ry charm that beams in Beauty's eye,
 To raise, refine, and humanize mankind,
 As from her radiant throne the Queen of Night
 Inspires complacence, and serenest the soul.

Now glows the bosom of the Moral Sage,
 While Night's high noon * its noon of meekness beams.
 Indulging oft the feelings of his heart,
 That prompt emotions rational and warm,
 His joy increases as its source refines.
 Admiring Nature, he adores her GOD,
 Not unobservant of her voice divine,
 Oft heard symphonious, or when Ev'ning falls,

Or Night's full choir surrounds the starry pole;
 In all, he sees pre-eminent the hand
 Of Pow'r Almighty and of Good Supreme;
 In this full ear that loaded Autumn bears,
 As in yon globe that gladdens distant worlds,
 Propitious Night approves th' exalted theme,
 And paints with purer beam the face of things.
 The air how cool, how fresh the gliding breeze!
 Inviting Silence to prolong her reign!
 The distant waterfall, scarce heard to roll,
 Diffusing stillness through the peaceful air,
 The varied mountain, and the vale imbrown'd,
 Th' expanding azure, and its fainter fires,
 The brighter moon, the shifting, silver cloud,
 The pleasing forms that meet th' Enthusiast's sight,
 That spread and lengthen the nocturnal calm,
 Detain his eager eye, his willing ear,
 And earth and heav'n reflect his bosom's glow:
 As when an angel, bent on high designs
 Of good to men, by Sov'reign Goodness plann'd,
 Delays his flight along th' ethereal way,
 To mark the hand of Heav'n's all-bounteous Sire,
 And, in the silence of seraphic thought,
 To trace his steps, to wonder and adore.



